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	GIWI-00	PRS-00	SCT-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	SP-00	IRM-00
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TAGS: KPAO, OPRC, KMDR, PREL, MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECT: AMIA BOMBING - REQUEST FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ARREST ORDER  
AGAINST RAFSANJANI; US EXPERT MARK JONES' STATEMENTS ON ARGENTINA  
10/26/06; BUENOS AIRES

## 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

All local papers widely report on the AMIA bombing prosecutor's request that an international arrest order be issued against former Iranian president Ali-Akbar Hashem Rafsanjani and seven other former Iranian government officials. The U.S.'s strong support for the investigation and the GOA received front page coverage.

Leading "Clarín," daily-of-record "La Nación" and Cordoba newspaper "La Voz del Interior" publish articles on yesterday's press conference with INL DAS Christie McCampbell, which was organized by the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Buenos Aires.

## 2. OPINION PIECES

- "The US congratulates the Kirchner administration"

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Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (10/26) "The USG and the different circles of power in this capital city received the expected decision from the AMIA prosecutor with equal doses of comfort and caution, according to remarks by the US Department of State, the US Jewish community and the OAS.

"The Bush administration congratulated the Kirchner administration for its 'dedication' to make progress in the investigation on the AMIA bombing. According to official spokespersons of the US Embassy in Buenos Aires, the attack was 'the deadliest anti-Semitic action since the end of the Second World War.'

"US Embassy representatives said 'we think that Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's report provides convincing evidence that the attack was planned and funded by the Iranian government and carried out with the cooperation of Hezbollah and local Iranian diplomats.' They therefore pointed out that 'the US congratulates the Argentine government for its dedication in seeing that justice is done in the AMIA bombing case.'

"... The gesture from the US Embassy in Buenos Aires helps to ease US-Argentine ties after April's USG annual report on international terrorism reiterated concern about the possible presence of Hamas and Hezbollah's groups on the Triple Border."

- "The danger of playing with fire"

Jorge Urien Berri, columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (10/26) "Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's request for international arrest orders should be taken cautiously..."

"... Everything seems to indicate that Judge Canicoba Corral will agree to his request for the international warrants.

"If this happens, the Argentine Government will either support his request eagerly or try instead to distance itself from the decision based on the independence of the three branches of power.

"In the first case, it will distance itself from Iran and Lebanon... In the second case, it will distance itself from Argentine Jewish leaders and Israel.

"The prosecutor's decision is functional to both the US and Israel, which are confronted with Iran..."

"... In the AMIA official story, Syria has always had little room for progressing because Israel has prioritized the fact that the Damascus regime, as opposed to Tehran's, is neither a theocratic nor a fundamentalist regime.

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"... Why hurry and put the Government on the verge of a confrontation with Iran? Why playing with fire when we have already burnt ourselves?"

- "A step that was delayed until yesterday not to offend Chavez"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" editorializes (10/26) "... The most important figures of the Jewish community, both at a local and international level, have long known about the report by AMIA prosecutor produced to justify his request for an international arrest order against the former Iranian president and seven other former government officials.

"... In the prosecutor's private meetings with representatives of the Jewish community, he always gave the same explanation - political caution... The (Argentine) Government did not want to break ties with Hugo Chavez, an ally of Iran...

"The authorities of the World Jewish Congress, the AMIA and other Jewish institutions took into consideration his explanation and brought the issue to Cristina Kirchner and Jorge Taiana's attention during their last trip to New York, and they expressed their huge concern about the delay which, according to their understanding, was the result of some kind of pressure from the (Argentine) government.

"... The Argentine government waited to launch the request for international arrest orders until the Venezuelan bid for a seat at the UN Security Council failed."

- "Twelve years on, the same clue"

Daniel Santoro, political analyst of leading "Clarín," writes (10/26) "The same clue pursued by the CIA and the Mosad when the AMIA was bombed in 1994 reappeared yesterday - Iran as the alleged mastermind of the attack and Hezbollah as the perpetrator. The so-called 'Syrian clue' seems to have been removed from the list of priorities in this stage of the investigation, which started in September 2004.

"... As the Argentine Government is unable to perform intelligence in the Middle East, both Judge Galeano and Prosecutor Nisman have resorted to reports from Mosad and the CIA, at a time when Iran is again being questioned by the US due to its controversial nuclear plan, which allegedly seeks to build a nuclear bomb.

"Nisman said that the Iranian government's reason to order Hezbollah to carry out the attack against the AMIA was the anger caused by by former president Menem's decision to unilaterally cancel in 1991,

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due to US pressure, a 30-million dollars contract according to which the INVAP public company was going to export to Iran one uranium purification factory and another for the manufacturing of inflammable elements. While Judge Galeano was not as specific as Nisman, he recalled that Menem had sent an Argentine Navy ship to be part of the US-led coalition to expel Iraq from Kuwait."

- "An advisor to (US President Bush) with expert knowledge about Argentina harshly criticizes Kirchner"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (10/26) "He is one of the experts in Argentina that the Bush administration most consults. Two weeks ago, Professor Mark Jones participated in a seminar organized to provide newly appointed US Ambassador to Argentina Anthony Earl Wayne with information. The seminar was private and, in addition to Jones, members of the CIA, the US Treasury Department, the US Department of Commerce and the US Pentagon participated.

"Jones, a professor at Rice University in Houston (George W. Bush's city), asserted that (the US) 'is very disappointed with Kirchner.'

"... Asked how he sees the US-Argentine bilateral relationship, Jones answered: 'It is good, because for Bush, Condoleezza Rice, or National Security Advisor Steven Hadley, Argentina is little relevant. When they think of Argentina, they think of small things, just like maintaining troops in Haiti, managing to appease Bolivia, and getting some international support. However, at the same time, the US is very disappointed with Kirchner because he handles foreign policy in the same way he handles domestic politics and says things that make a bad impression. On top of everything we had the Mar del Plata Summit. Ever since then, the bilateral relationship has been frozen because at that moment, everyone (Rice, Bush and Hadley) was thinking of Argentina, and it turned out so badly.'

"Asked why, then, Shannon insists that the US-Argentine bilateral relationship is good, Jones answered: 'The relationship is good on a formal level. They do not want more friction with the South, they want no more problems but it is a relationship without substance.'

"Asked what cost Argentina's support for Venezuela will have at the UN, Jones said 'Not much, I think. Kirchner is not viewed in Washington like Chavez, Castro or Morales. He is neither viewed like Bachelet, Tabare or Lula, but in the middle. Most of the members of the Bush administration think that Kirchner is devoting more time to domestic than foreign policy, and that his ties with Chavez are guided by convenience, and not by ideological affinity.'"

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